



#3

(OF 6)

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# STAR WARS

## DARK EMPIRE



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# BOOK 3: THE BATTLE FOR CALAMARI

Brought to a sinister and beautiful world called *Byss*, Luke Skywalker finds himself the prisoner of *Emperor Palpatine*, now triumphantly alive!

As the villainous Emperor explains to Luke, it was to Byss that his living energy was transported when his diseased and corrupted body was destroyed by Darth Vader. On Byss he took a new *clone body* — as he had *many times before*.

Once restored to physical life, the Emperor allowed the civil war to rage on while he quietly and patiently rebuilt his forces, preparing a massive final blow against all who would deny him everlasting dominion over the Empire!

Even now, as Luke appears to fall under the Emperor's ever-expanding power, massive engines of destruction are inflicting death blows to the floating cities of the Calamari, long-standing allies of the Rebel Alliance...

In response to Admiral Ackbar's urgent commands, the Rebel Destroyer *Emancipator*, together with an armada of Frigates and Star Cruisers, makes the hyperspace jump to the Calamari water world, ready to engage the Emperor's *World Devastators*!



**HYPERSPACE** -- ABOARD THE REBEL  
STAR DESTROYER *EMANCIPATOR*.

GENERAL CALRISSIAN, WE'VE  
INTERCEPTED A NEW **HYPERSPACE**  
COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL...  
BEAMED BETWEEN CALAMARI'S  
ORBIT AND THE GALACTIC CORE.

THEY'RE TRANSMITTING  
IMAGES OF THE **DESTRUCTION**  
ON CALAMARI...

LOOK AT  
THE **SIZE** OF  
THOSE WAR  
MACHINES,  
LANDO!

THEY'RE DOING US  
A REAL FAVOR BY BEAMING  
THOSE IMAGES, WEDGE...

GRIGGS! RECALCULATE  
OUR EXIT FROM **HYPERSPACE**  
AT TWO DEGREES FROM  
THEIR POINT OF TRANSMISSION!

YES, SIR!  
THE NAVICOMPUTER  
SAYS WE CAN MAKE  
THAT ADJUSTMENT,  
SIR.

ARE YOU CRAZY?  
IF WE LEAVE **HYPERSPACE**  
AT THOSE COORDINATES,  
WE'LL SMASH INTO WHAT-  
EVER'S SENDING THIS  
SIGNAL!

THAT'S  
THE IDEA,  
WEDGE!

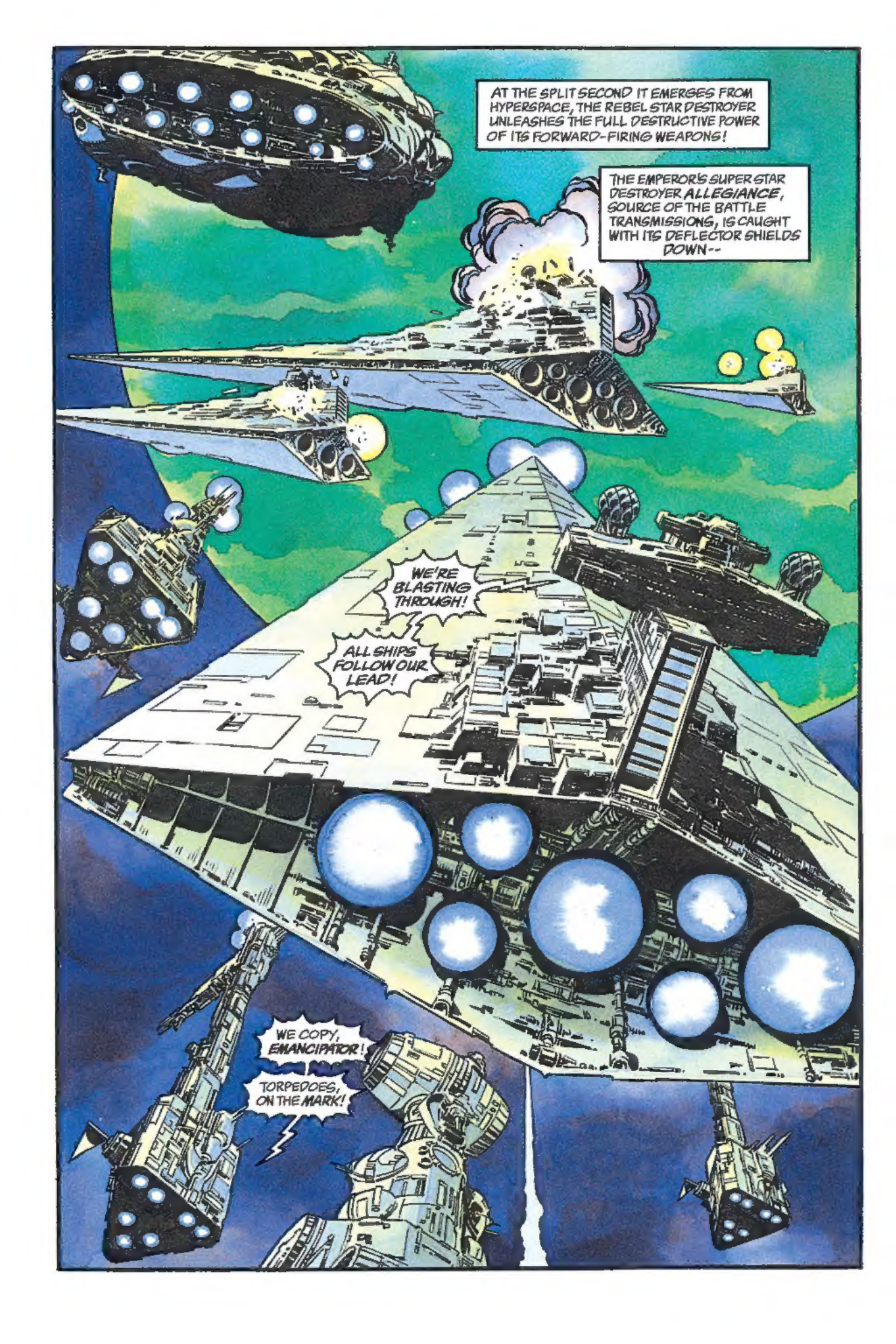
COORDINATES LOCKED IN,  
GENERAL CALRISSIAN. WE  
EXIT **HYPERSPACE** IN  
FORTY-FIVE SECONDS!

STAND BY TO  
CUT IN **SUBLIGHT**  
ENGINES...

ZEV! FIRE ALL  
FORWARD TURBOLASERS  
AND ION CANNONS AT MY  
COMMAND--

YES,  
SIR!





AT THE SPLIT SECOND IT EMERGES FROM  
HYPERSPACE, THE REBEL STAR DESTROYER  
UNLEASHES THE FULL DESTRUCTIVE POWER  
OF ITS FORWARD-FIRING WEAPONS!

THE EMPEROR'S SUPER STAR  
DESTROYER ALLEGIANCE,  
SOURCE OF THE BATTLE  
TRANSMISSIONS, IS CAUGHT  
WITH ITS DEFLECTOR SHIELDS  
DOWN--

WE'RE  
BLASTING  
THROUGH!

ALL SHIPS  
FOLLOW OUR  
LEAD!

WE COPY,  
EMANCIPATOR!

TORPEDOES,  
ON THE MARK!



THAT'S IT!  
INFORM PINNACLE  
BASE WE'RE IN  
POSITION OVER  
CALAMARI!

DEFLECTOR SHIELDS UP!  
PREPARE TO TAKE FURTHER  
OFFENSIVE ACTION!

THE REST OF THE  
FLEET'S THROUGH, SIR!  
THEY'RE HOLDING THE OTHER  
STAR DESTROYERS!

DROP THE X-WINGS  
AND SPEEDER TRANSPORTS!

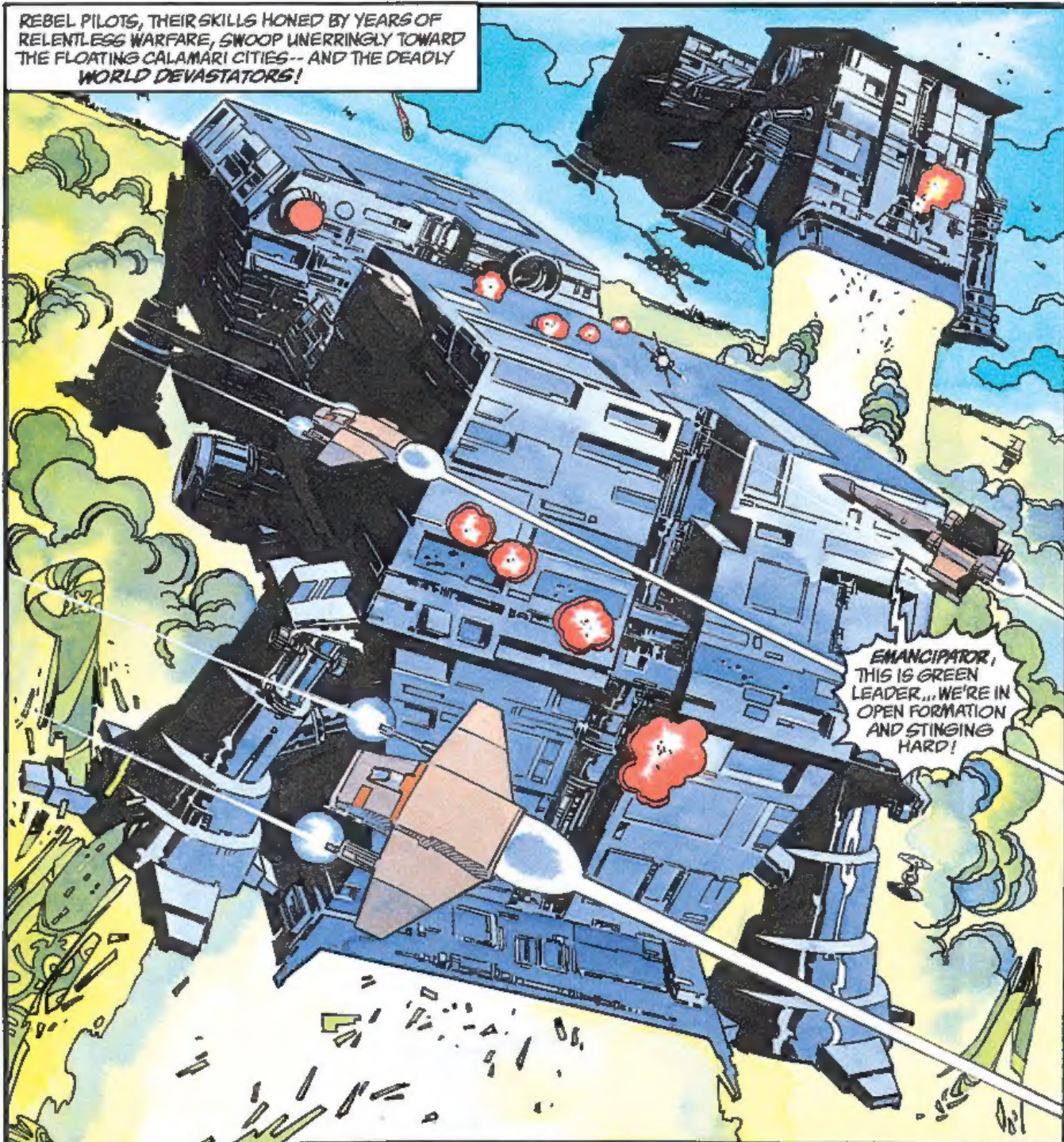
WE'VE GOT TO  
GET DOWN THERE  
AND HAMMER THOSE  
DEVASTATORS!

X-WINGS  
AND TRANSPORTS  
AWAY!



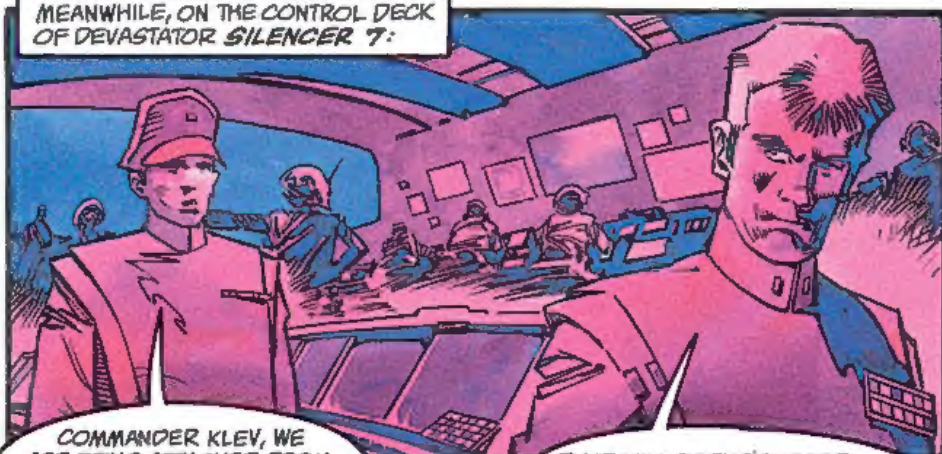


REBEL PILOTS, THEIR SKILLS HONED BY YEARS OF RELENTLESS WARFARE, SWOOP UNERRINGLY TOWARD THE FLOATING CALAMARI CITIES-- AND THE DEADLY WORLD DEVASTATORS!



EMANCIPATOR,  
THIS IS GREEN  
LEADER...WE'RE IN  
OPEN FORMATION  
AND STINGING  
HARD!

MEANWHILE, ON THE CONTROL DECK OF DEVASTATOR SILENCER 7:



COMMANDER KLEV, WE  
ARE BEING ATTACKED FROM  
LOW ORBIT. X-WING FIGHTERS  
AND SPEEDERS... LAUNCHED  
FROM AN IMPERIAL-CLASS  
STAR DESTROYER!

THAT WILL BE THE CURSED  
REBEL ALLIANCE...THEY CAPTURED  
TWO OF OUR SHIPS AT ENDOR,  
YEARS AGO.



SIR, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THOSE X-WINGS ARE NOTHING BUT ANTIQUES.

THEY HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF PENETRATING OUR DEFENSE.

YES, AND THEY CAN HARDLY REALIZE THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF OUR COMMAND... THEIR GAME IS OVER.

SEND BYSS INTO COMMAND

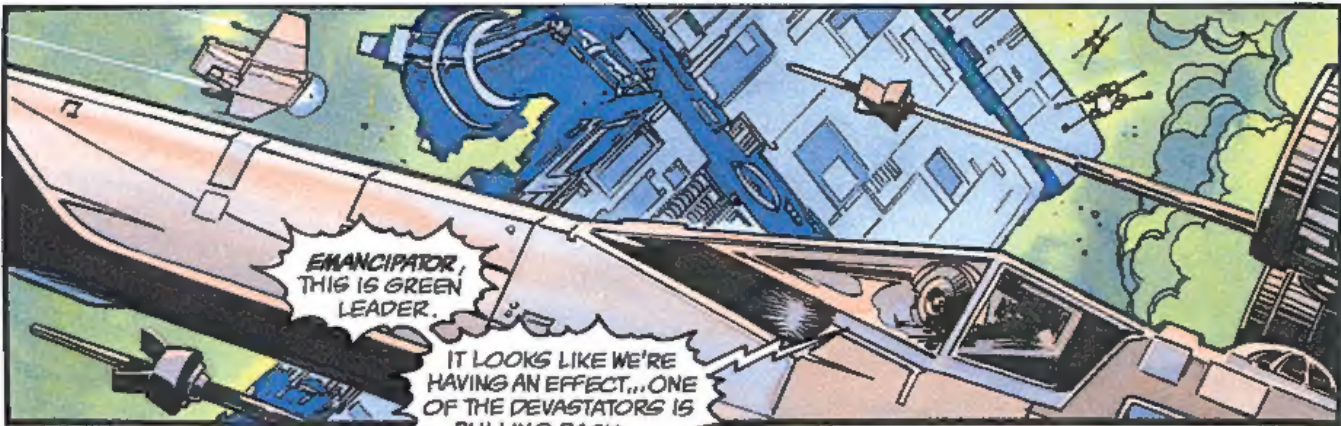
MESSAGE TO RM SUPREME ER SKYWALKER

SEND A MESSAGE TO  
BYSS. INFORM SUPREME  
COMMANDER SKYWALKER  
OF THEIR PRESENCE...

MEANWHILE, LET'S  
GIVE THE ALLIANCE A  
TASTE OF WHAT THEY'RE  
UP AGAINST!

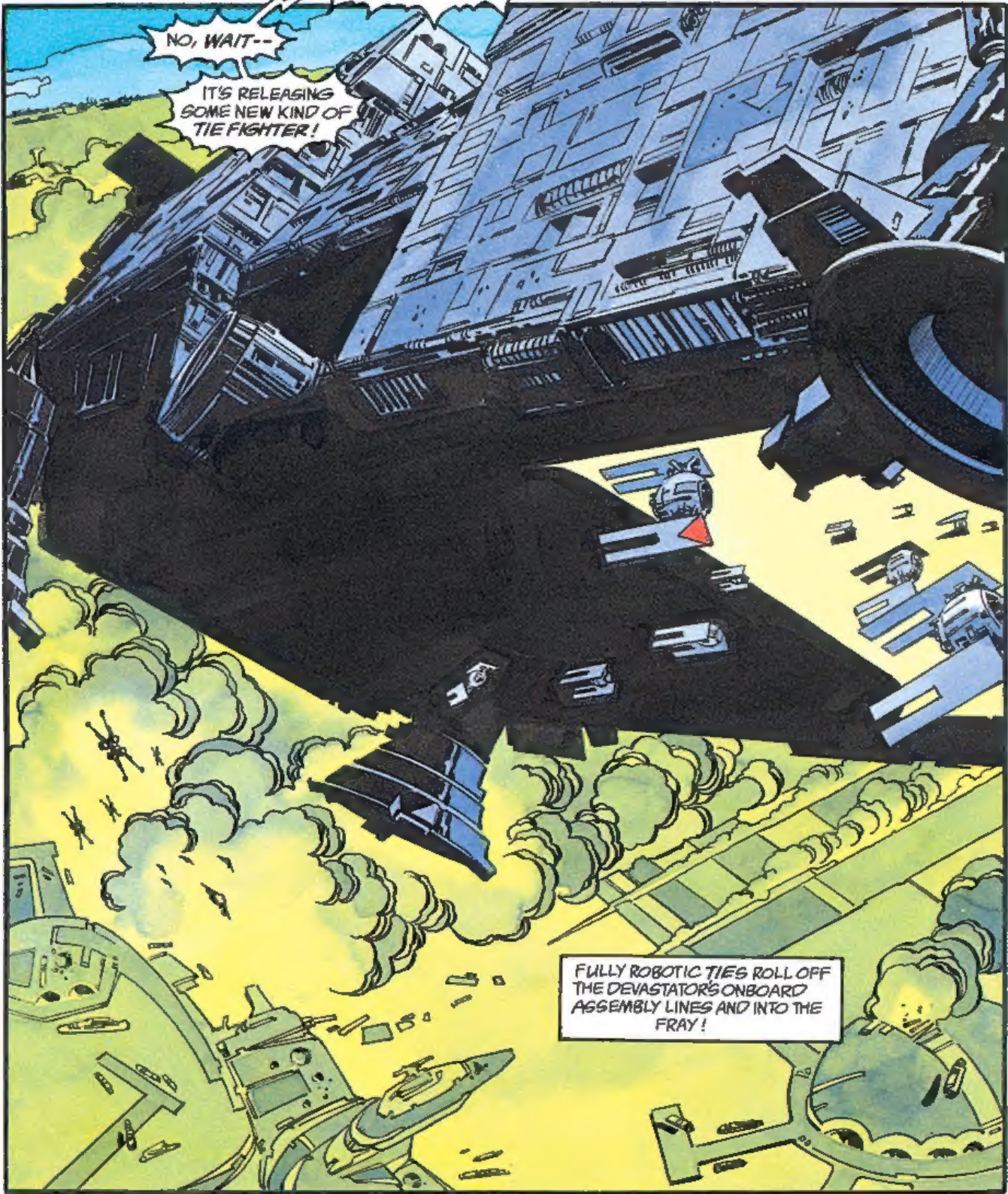
ADMIRAL ACKBAR  
HAS NOT ABANDONED US!  
HE'S CALLED DOWN THE  
WHOLE ALLIANCE ON  
THEIR HEADS!





EMANCIPATOR,  
THIS IS GREEN  
LEADER.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE  
HAVING AN EFFECT...ONE  
OF THE DEVASTATORS IS  
PULLING BACK...

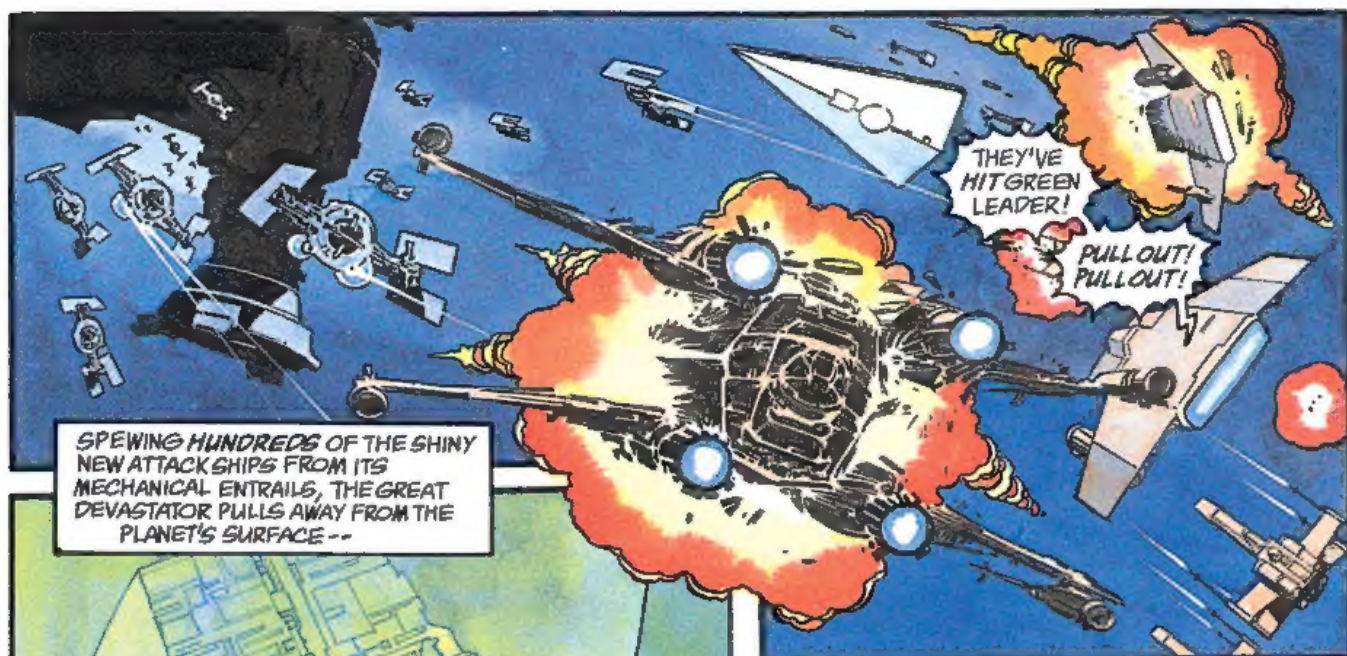


NO, WAIT--

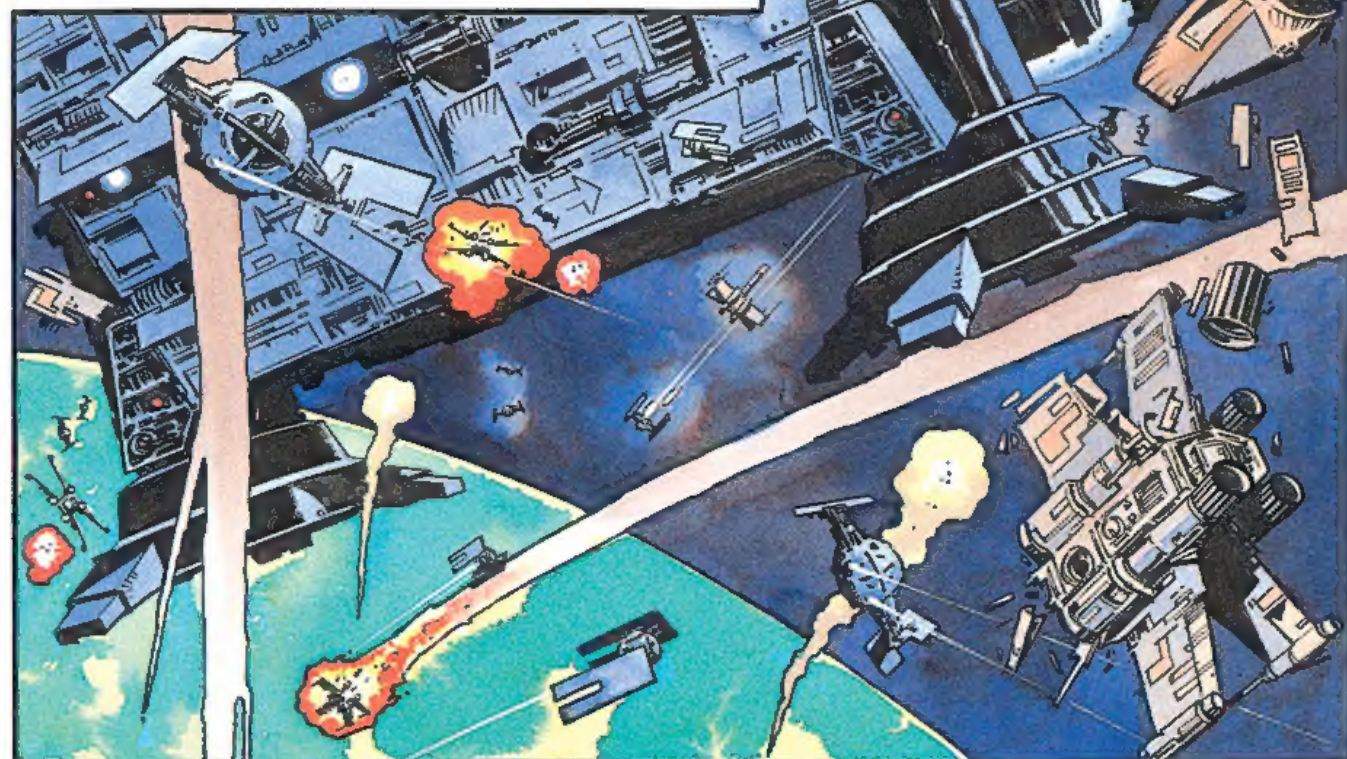
IT'S RELEASING  
SOME NEW KIND OF  
TIE FIGHTER!

FULLY ROBOTIC TIES ROLL OFF  
THE DEVASTATOR'S ONBOARD  
ASSEMBLY LINES AND INTO THE  
FRAY!

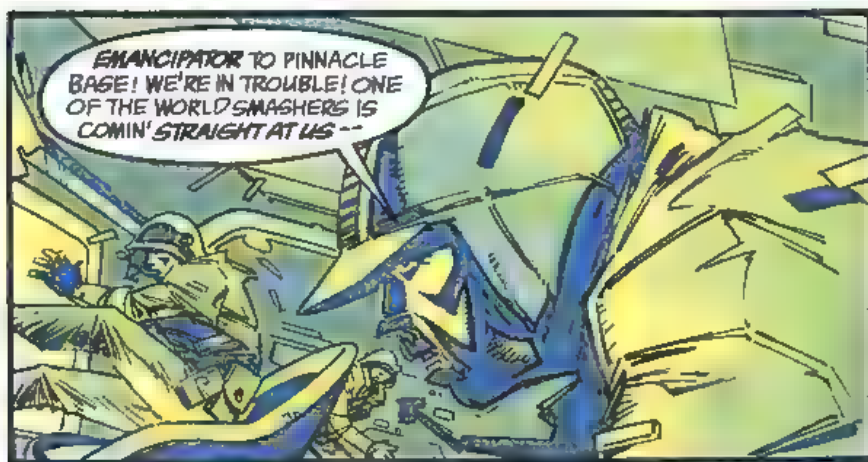




SPEWING HUNDREDS OF THE SHINY NEW ATTACK SHIPS FROM ITS MECHANICAL ENTRAILS, THE GREAT DEVASTATOR PULLS AWAY FROM THE PLANET'S SURFACE--









AT THAT VERY MOMENT, AT PINNACLE BASE, REBEL COMMAND POST ON THE FIFTH MOON OF DA SOOCHA, PRINCESS LEIA RECEIVES AN UNEXPECTED VISITATION: A VISION OF THE PAST!

F-FATHER?  
IS IT... YOU?

NO... YOUR FATHER IS  
FREE... WITH ALL THE JEDI  
WHO WENT BEFORE...

...AND DARTH VADER  
LIVES NO MORE... MY--

--SISTER.





LEIA... DO NOT TRY TO FIND ME...

DO NOT INTERFERE.

DESTINY HAS FORCED ME TO FOLLOW THE PATH OUR FATHER TOOK... IT WAS THE ONLY WAY...

...THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE EVERYTHING... FROM THE POWER OF THE DARK SIDE!

LUKE-- NO!

THAT CANNOT BE! YOU KNOW THAT!

HOW CAN YOU SAVE US BY JOINING WITH THE DARK SIDE? YOU'LL DESTROY YOURSELF...

...AND YOU'LL DESTROY US WITH YOU!

SUDDENLY ANOTHER PRESENCE SEEMS TO OVERSHADOW THE VISION OF SKYWALKER... AND LEIA HEARS THE SEPULCHRAL TONES OF THE DARK SIDE...

YESS, LITTLE JEDI... YOUR BROTHER HAS RISKED ALL--

--AND LOST!

HELLO?

PRINCESS LEIA?

OH, THERE YOU ARE... I REALLY NEEDED THAT REST TO REVITALIZE MY TRANSLATION CIRCUITS--

OH, MY WORD! SHE'S COLLAPSED!



MEANWHILE, UNAWARE OF HIS WIFE'S DISTRESS, HAN SOLO INSTRUCTS NEW RECRUITS IN THE MAIN HANGAR.

A MAJOR WEAPONS MANUFACTURING PLANT HAS JUST DEPOSED ITS GOVERNOR AND JOINED THE ALLIANCE...

YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE RESULTS--THE LATEST HOT IMPERIAL FIGHTER. WE'VE GOT IT, AND YOU GUYS GET TO FLY IT!

NOT ONLY DO YOU GET TO FLY IT-- BUT YOU GET TO FLY IT TOMORROW!

WHY'S THAT, GENERAL SOLO?

'CAUSE WE JUST GOT WORD WE'RE GETTING THE STUFFING KICKED OUT OF US ON CALAMARI BY THOSE NEW WAR MACHINES...

I HAVEN'T GONE UP AGAINST 'EM, UNFORTUNATELY, BUT I'M TOLD THEY'RE MEANER THAN THE DEATH STAR...

...SO YOU GUYS HAVE GOT YOUR WORK CUT OUT FOR YOU!

OVER HERE WE HAVE THE LATEST ALLIANCE FIGHTER CRAFT--THE E-WING.

IT'S A GOOD SHIP, BUT WE'VE HAD TO BEEF UP THE CANNONS TO THE POINT WHERE THEY MIGHT BLOW UP IN YOUR FACE... AIN'T THAT RIGHT, CHEWIE?

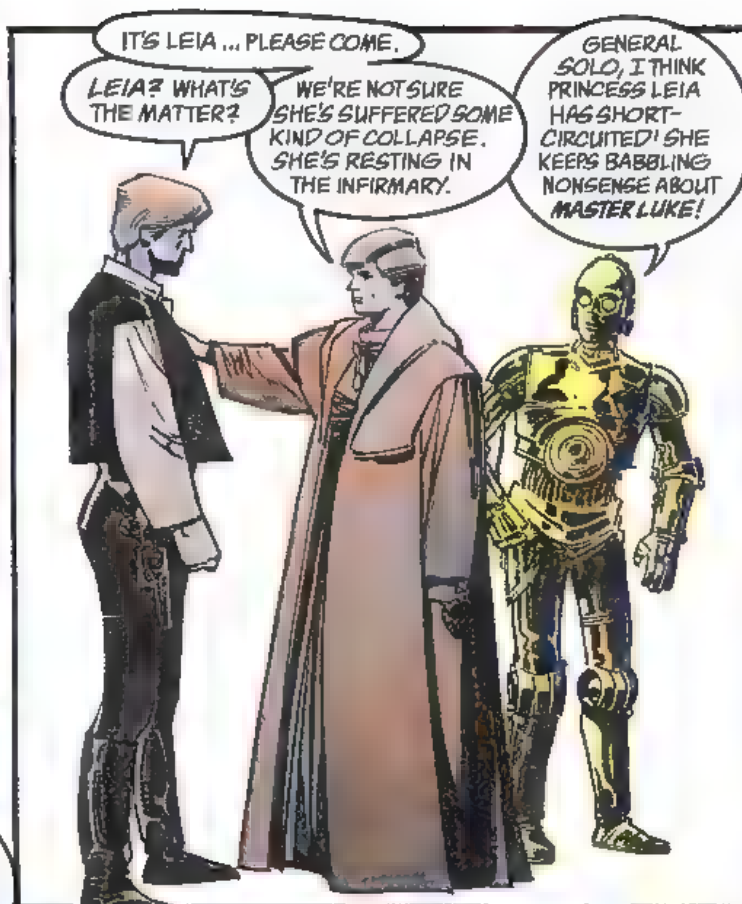
GNAARRRUH!





UH-OH... HERE COMES MON MOTHMA WITH A REAL STRANGE LOOK ON HER FACE...

CHEWIE-- BETTER QUIT PLAYIN' AROUND AND FINISH BUTTONING UP THE FALCON... I GOT A FEELIN' THIS IS IT...

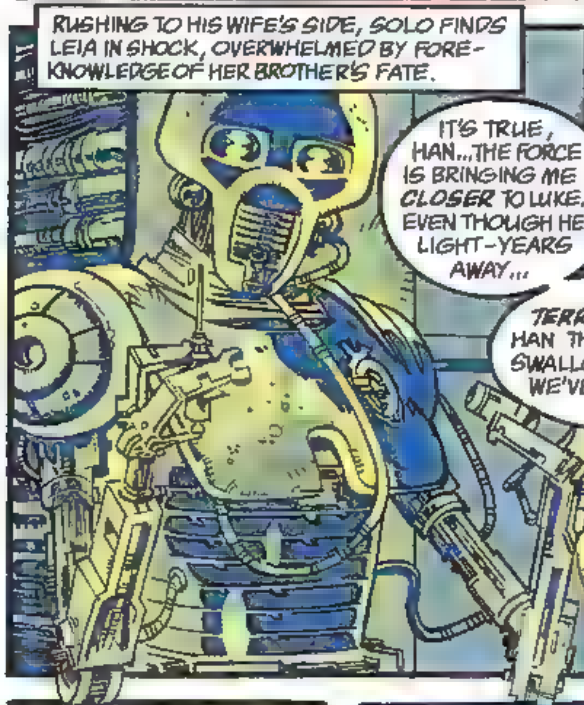


IT'S LEIA ... PLEASE COME.

LEIA? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

WE'RE NOT SURE SHE'S SUFFERED SOME KIND OF COLLAPSE. SHE'S RESTING IN THE INFIRMARY.

GENERAL SOLO, I THINK PRINCESS LEIA HAS SHORT-CIRCUITED! SHE KEEPS BABBLING NONSENSE ABOUT MASTER LUKE!



RUSHING TO HIS WIFE'S SIDE, SOLO FINDS LEIA IN SHOCK, OVERWHELMED BY FORE-KNOWLEDGE OF HER BROTHER'S FATE.

IT'S TRUE, HAN... THE FORCE IS BRINGING ME CLOSER TO LUKE... EVEN THOUGH HE'S LIGHT-YEARS AWAY...

HE'S IN TERRIBLE TROUBLE, HAN. THE DARK SIDE IS SWALLOWING HIM WHOLE! WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!



SURE, WHY NOT? THERE'S ONLY TWELVE MILLION INHABITED STAR SYSTEMS OUT THERE... IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD...



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I CAN FIND HIM... THE FORCE WILL LEAD ME TO HIM...



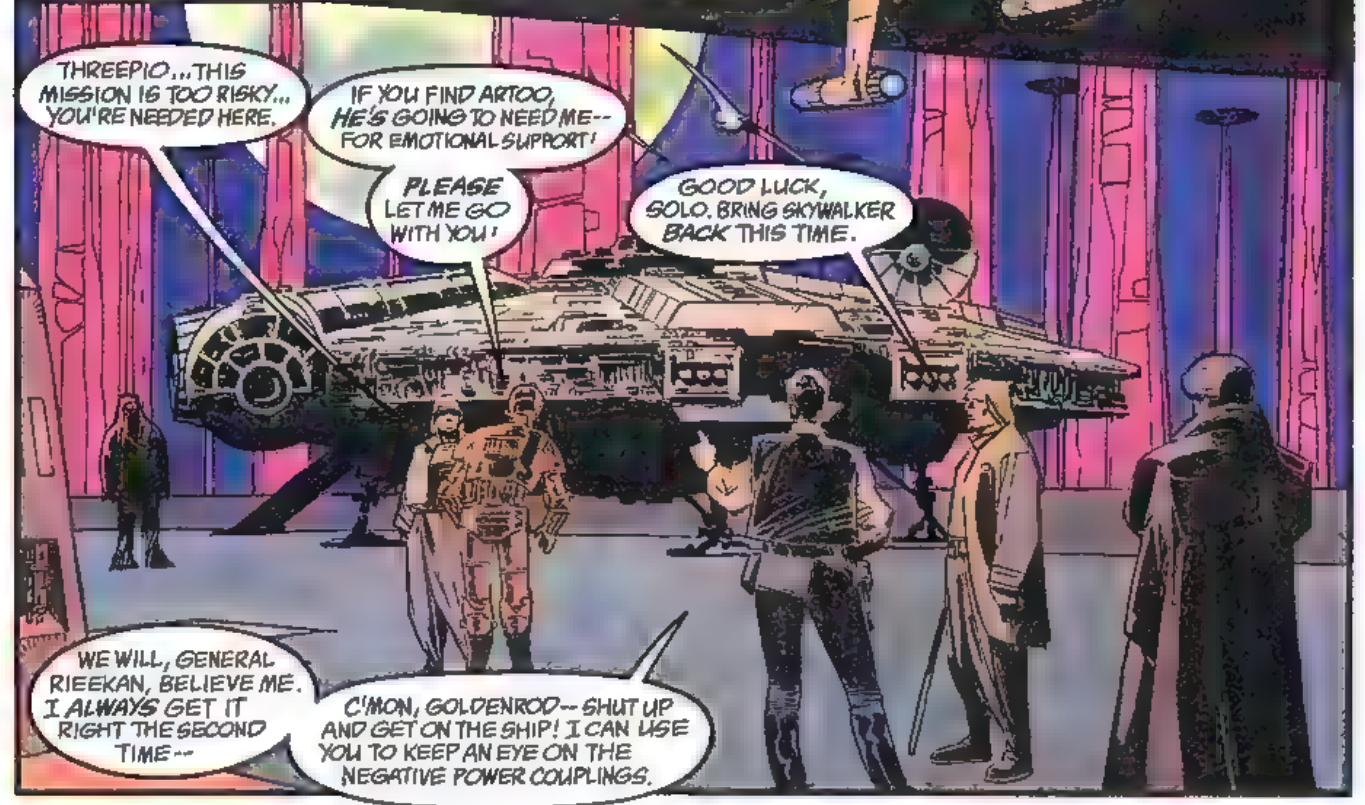
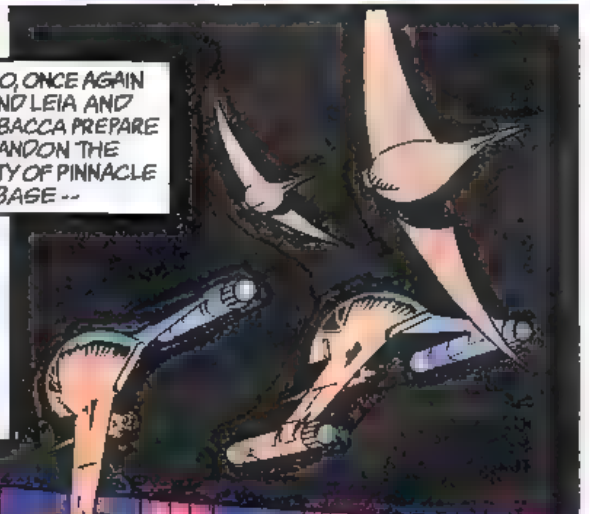
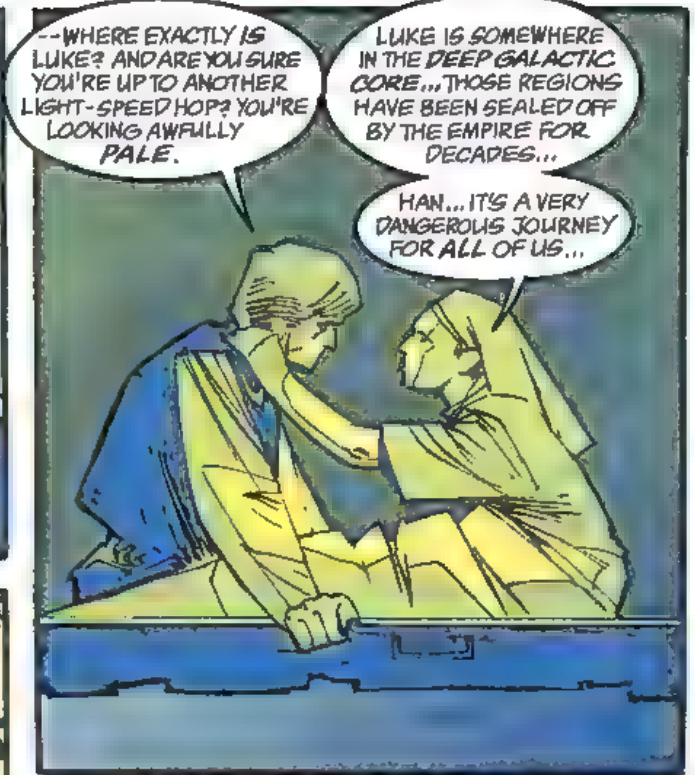
LUKE IS PROBABLY THE LAST FULLY REALIZED JEDI, GENERAL SOLO. IF HE IS LOST-- IT MAY BE OVER FOR THE REBEL ALLIANCE... AND THE GALAXY.



YEAH, WELL, IF HE'S SUCH A GREAT JEDI, HOW COME I HAVE TO KEEP RESCUING HIM?

HAN--!







ACCOMPANIED BY SWARMS OF  
IXLS, THE *MILLENNIUM FALCON*  
VAULTS TOWARD DEEP SPACE

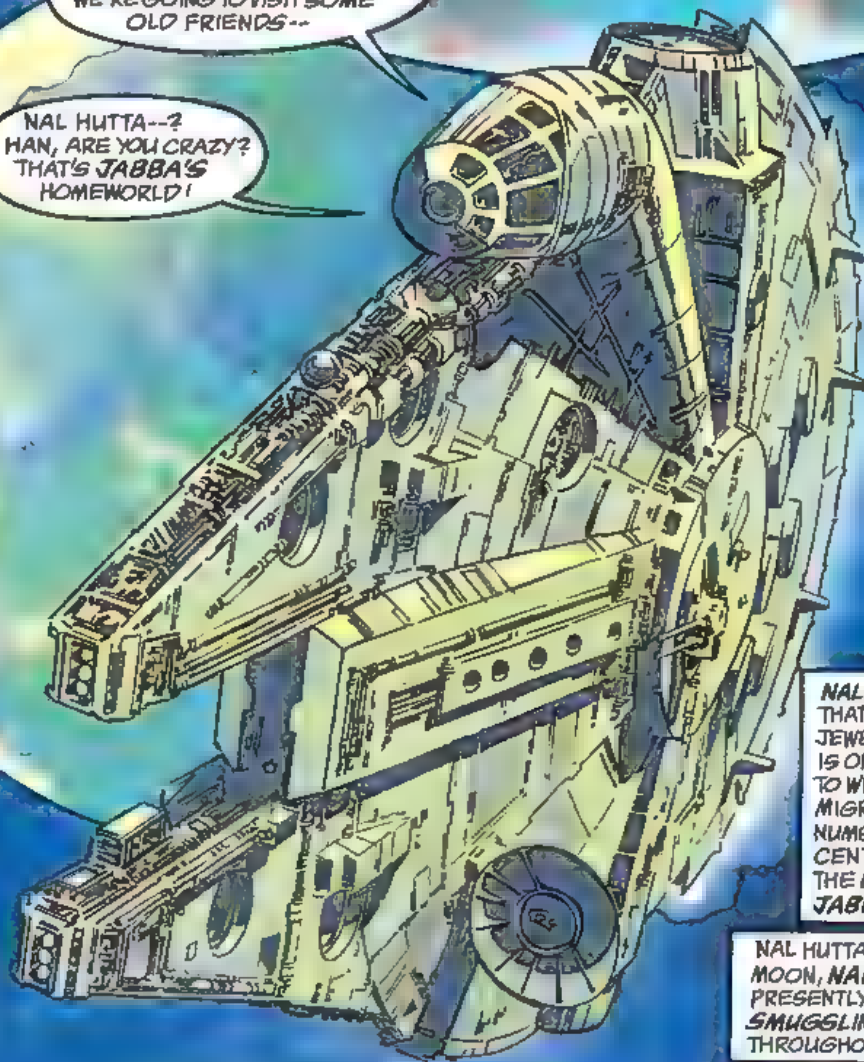
GENERAL RIEEKAN, IT IS NOW  
CLEAR TO ME THAT THE FUTURE OF  
THE NEW REPUBLIC DEPENDS ON  
THE REVIVAL OF THE JEDI KNIGHTS...

...IF LUKE IS LOST  
TO THE DARK SIDE, THE  
ALLIANCE IS FINISHED.



SET COORDINATES FOR  
THE *NAL HUTTA* SYSTEM, CHEWIE.  
WE'RE GOING TO VISIT SOME  
OLD FRIENDS--

*NAL HUTTA*--? HAN,  
ARE YOU CRAZY?  
THAT'S *JABBA*'S  
HOMEWORLD!



*NAL HUTTA*, A NAME  
THAT MEANS "GLORIOUS  
JEWEL" IN HUTTESE,  
IS ONE OF THE SYSTEMS  
TO WHICH HUTTS  
MIGRATED IN GREAT  
NUMBERS OVER THE  
CENTURIES. IT IS ALSO  
THE BIRTHPLACE OF  
*JABBA THE HUTT*.

*NAL HUTTA*'S GREAT SPACEPORT  
MOON, *NAR SHADDAA*, IS  
PRESENTLY THE CENTER OF  
SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES  
THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY.

IN THE DAYS BEFORE HYPERSPACE  
TRAVEL, *NAR SHADDAA* WAS A  
HEAVILY POPULATED WAYSTATION  
AND CARGO PORT--



--NOW IT'S AN UNGOVERNED,  
DERELICT WORLD, A PLACE  
WHERE THE ONLY LAW IS THE  
DEAL YOU CUT WITH YOUR  
FRIEND... AND YOUR ENEMY!

WELCOME TO  
NAR SHADDAA!

CHEWIE--KICK  
IN THE SUBLIGHT  
ENGINES.

WNUARN!

HAN, EVERYBODY  
KNOWS NAR SHADDAA  
IS CRAWLING WITH  
HUTTS AND BOUNTY  
HUNTERS--

--THERE'S BOUND  
TO BE A HUGE PRICE ON  
OUR HEADS AFTER WHAT  
I DID TO JABBA!

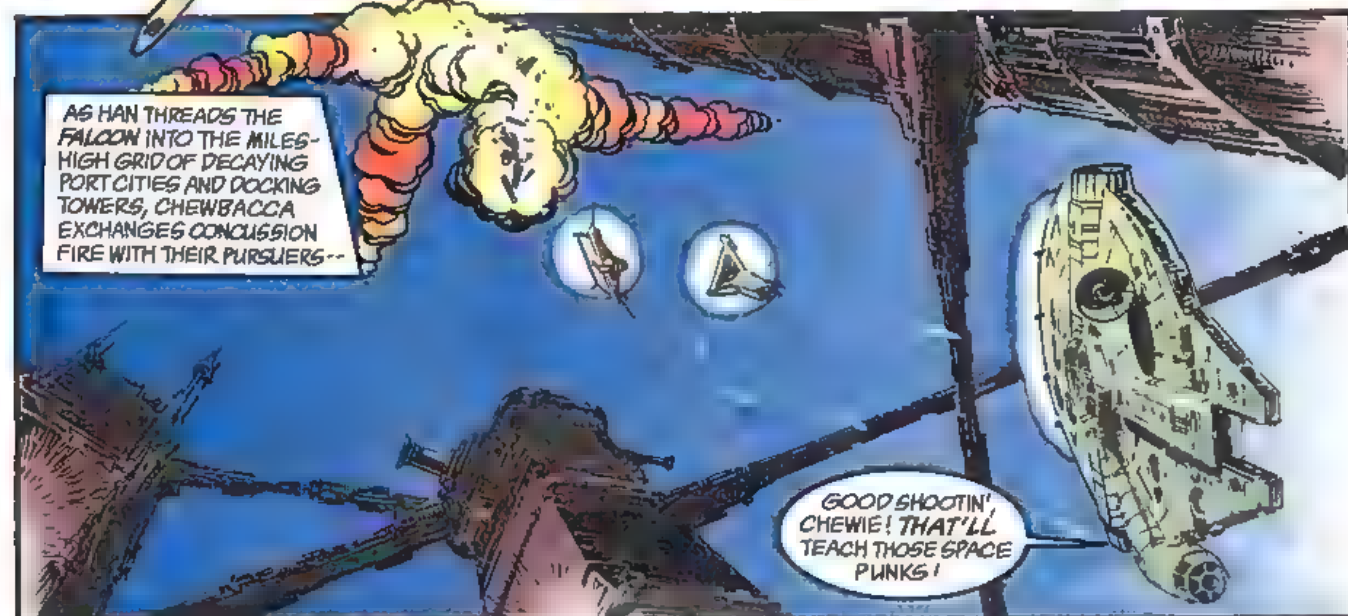
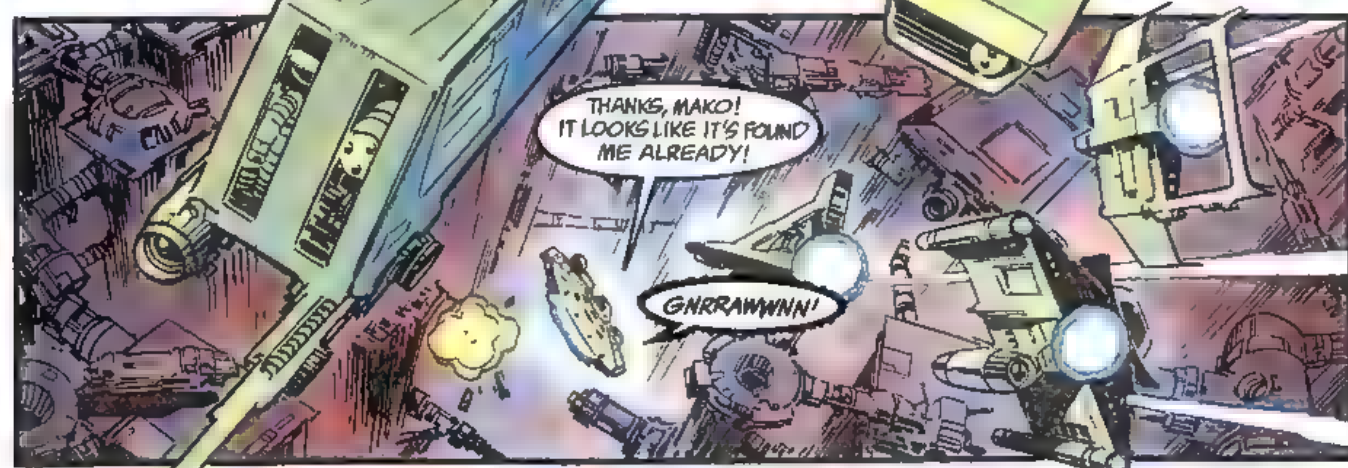
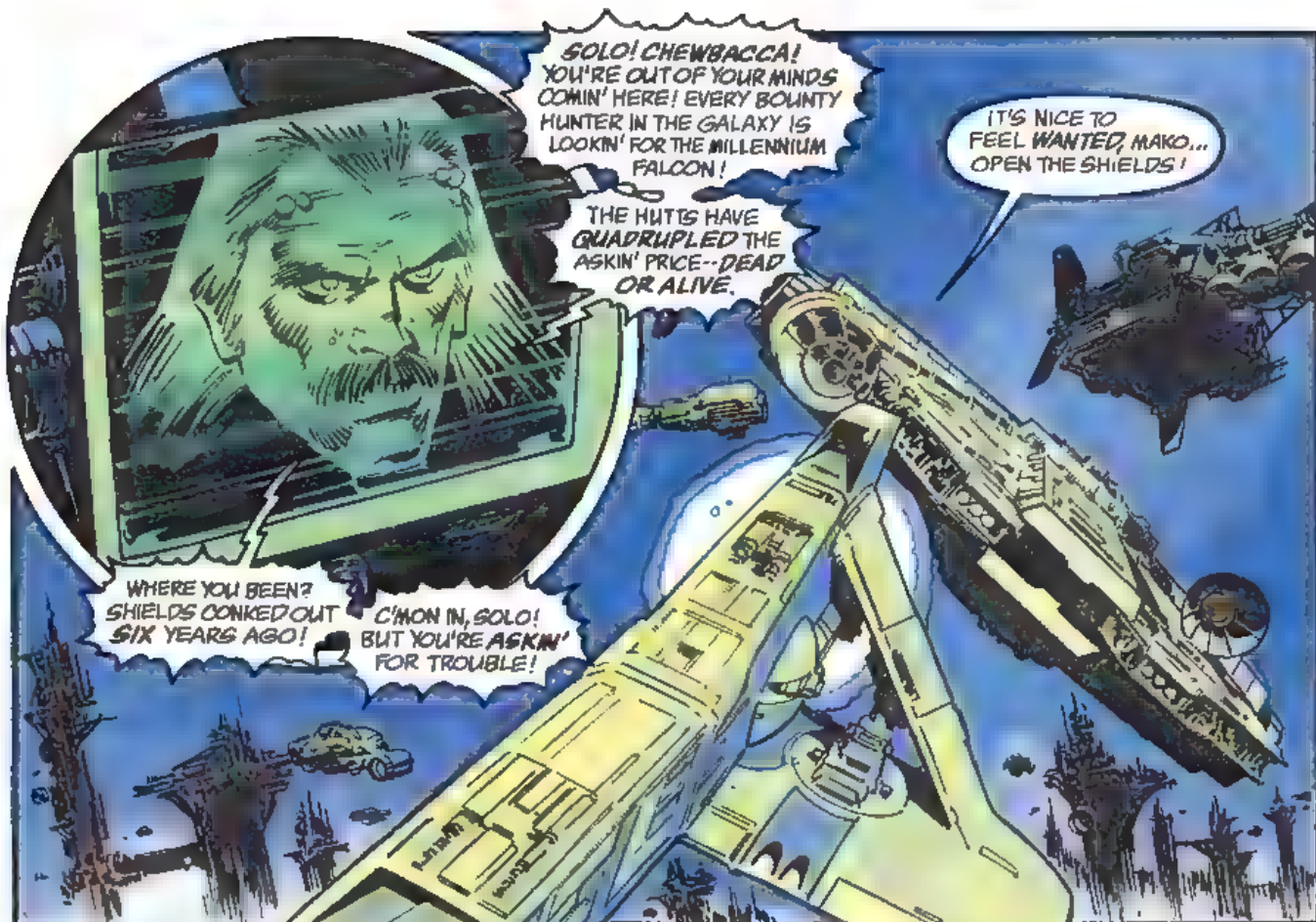
YEAH...I  
THOUGHT OF  
THAT.

BUT I'VE GOT  
FRIENDS HERE. THIS  
IS HOME!

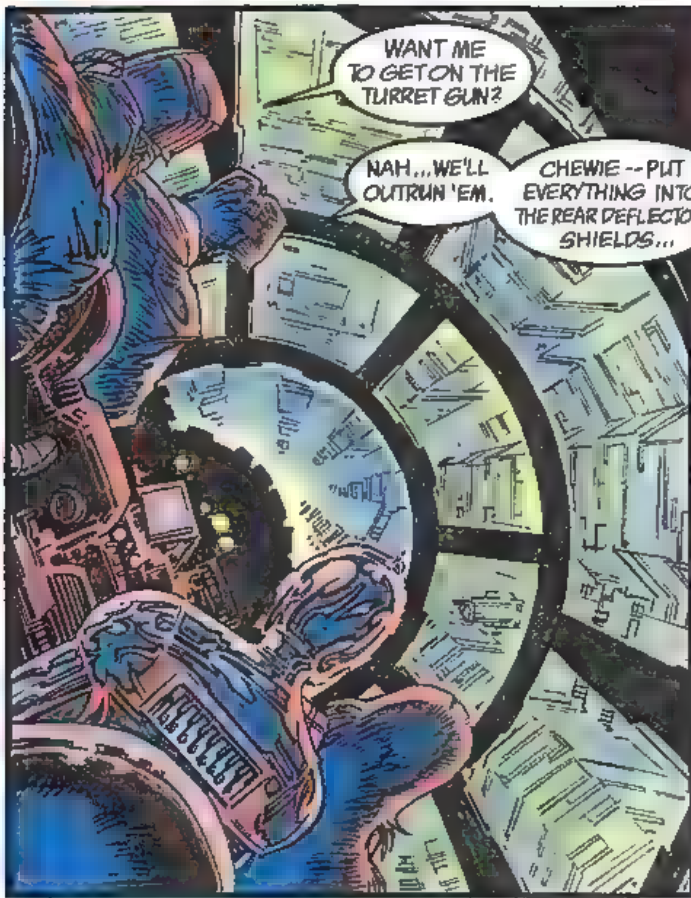
...LOOK! THERE'S  
MY OLD BUDDY MAKO--  
JUST COMIN' UP ON THE  
MONITOR!











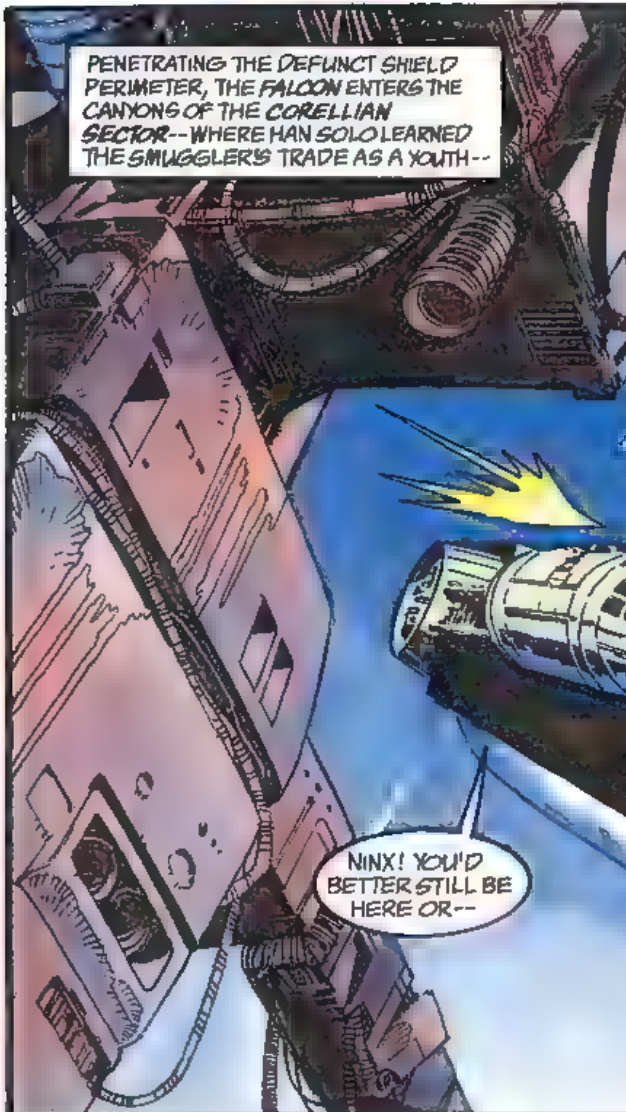
WANT ME  
TO GET ON THE  
TURRET GUN?

NAH...WE'LL  
OUTRUN 'EM.

CHEWIE -- PUT  
EVERYTHING INTO  
THE REAR DEFLECTOR  
SHIELDS...



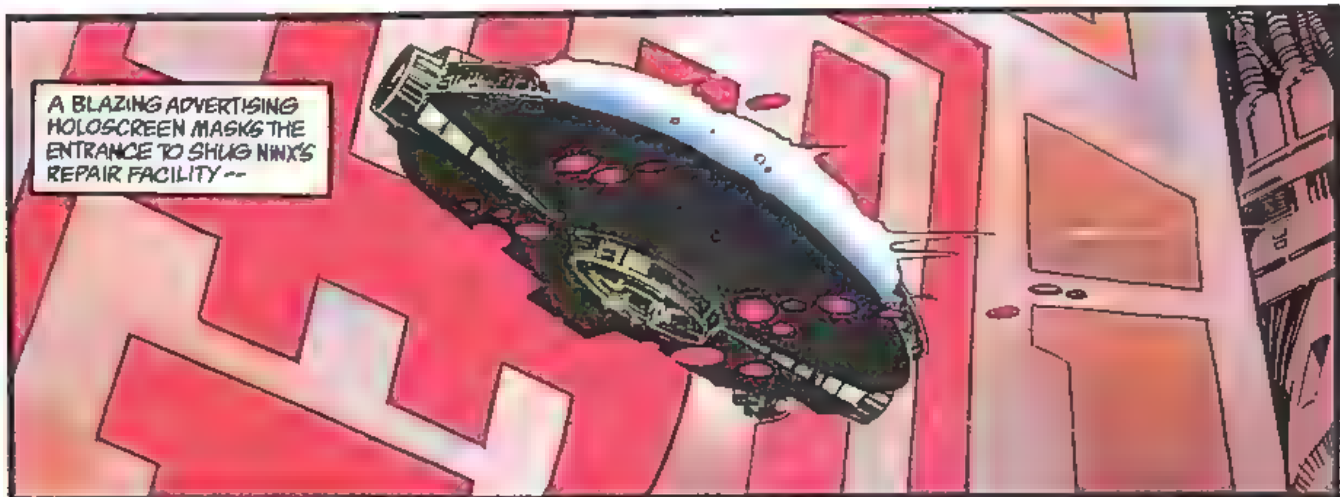
I'VE GOT ANOTHER  
BUDDY-- NINX. FIXES SHIPS  
FOR A LIVING... HE STILL OWES  
ME ONE... LESSEE... WHAT'S  
HIS COMM-CODE?



PENETRATING THE DEFUNCT SHIELD  
PERIMETER, THE FALCON ENTERS THE  
CANYONS OF THE CORELLIAN  
SECTOR-- WHERE HAN SOLO LEARNED  
THE SMUGGLER'S TRADE AS A YOUTH--

NINX! YOU'D  
BETTER STILL BE  
HERE OR--







--A MILES-LONG ACCESS CHUTE THAT CUTS INTO THE CORRUPT HEART OF THE CITY!

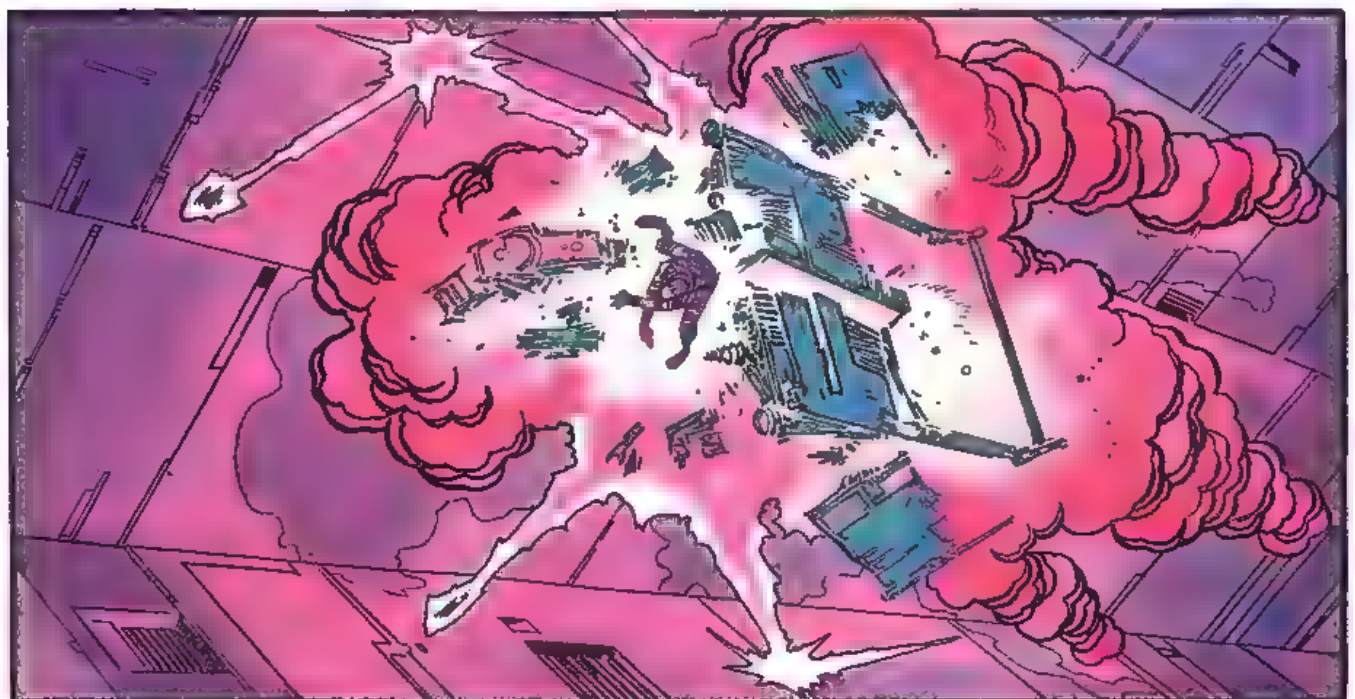
NINX! ONE OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS FOLLOWED US INTO THE CHUTE! HIT HIM!

HANG ON, SOLO... THE SECURITY SYSTEM'S BEEN GIVING ME TROUBLE... I'M HAND-CODING YOU INTO THE SCANNER. WAIT A MINUTE...

HIT HIM, NINX-- STOP PLAYIN' GAMES! POWER JUST DROPPED 60% ON MY DEFLECTOR SHIELDS!

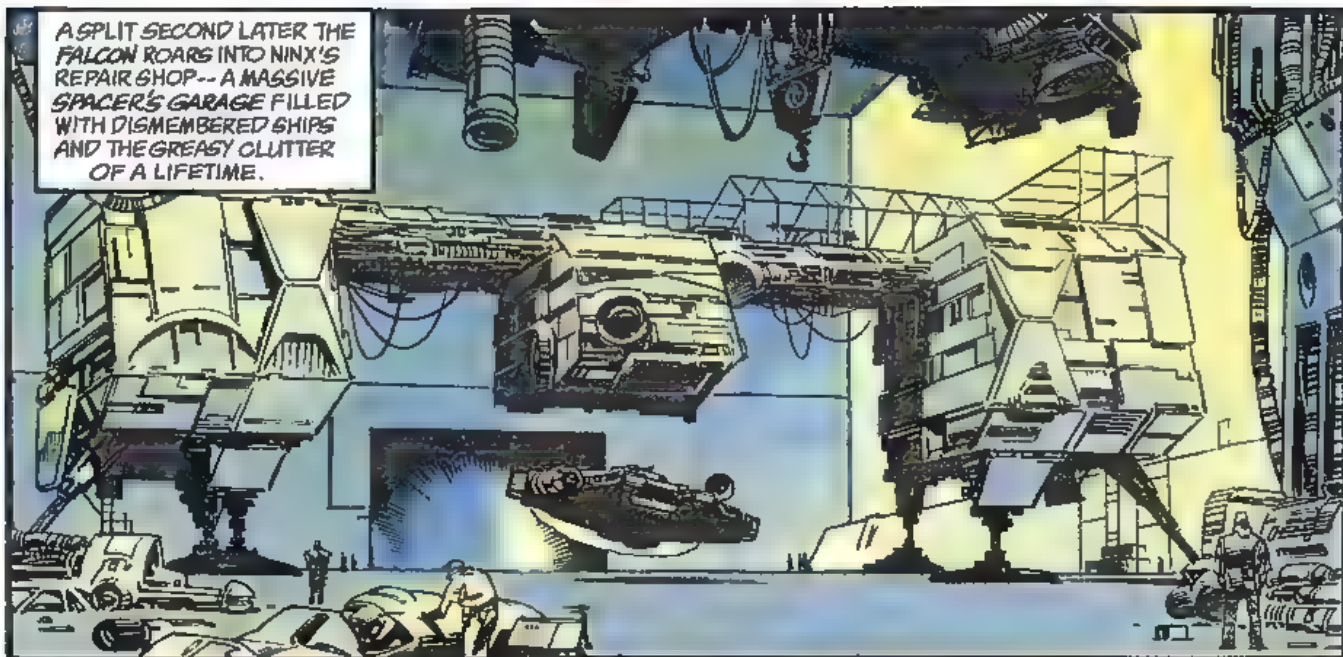
OKAY, SOLO... HERE WE GO.

SECURITY TURBOS GOT HIM NAILED!





A SPLIT SECOND LATER THE FALCON ROARS INTO NINX'S REPAIR SHOP-- A MASSIVE SPACER'S GARAGE FILLED WITH DISMEMBERED SHIPS AND THE GREASY CLUTTER OF A LIFETIME.



SOLO! CHEWBACCA! HAVEN'T SEEN YOU GUYS IN A RAMOOR'S AGE!

HEARD YOU KILLED JABBA... NOBODY KILLS A HUTT AND LIVES!

YEAH, WELL... ACTUALLY MY WIFE DID IT.

LEIA... THIS IS SHUG NINX. HE'S GOT THAT CORELLIAN HEART OF GOLD... AND SILVER... AND SPICE.



LEIA. SO YOU ACED OL' JABBA! GUESS YOU'RE A LOT ROUGHER THAN YOU LOOK!

EXCUSE ME... WOULD YOU MIND IF I USED YOUR OIL BATH? NO ONE'S REMEMBERED TO LUBRICATE ME THEY'RE ALL SO BUSY FIGHTING.

SURE--RIGHT OVER THERE HELP YOURSELF, GOLD DOME

NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' HERE, SOLO, BUT I WANT YOU GUYS TO KNOW OL' NINX IS MORE THAN HAPPY TO PUT HIS OWN LIFE ON THE LINE FOR YA --





--BUT THE TRUTH IS, THINGS ARE REAL CRAZY RIGHT NOW. THE IMPERIALS ARE BUYING UP CARGO SPACE ON EVERY TIN CAN IN THE GALAXY.

THE ACTION IS IN HEAVY-EQUIPMENT RUNS... MOVIN' MILITARY HARDWARE.

THAT'S WHY SALLA HERE IS BUILDIN' THAT MONSTER SHIP YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT-- THE STARLIGHT INTRUDER.

UH... HI, SALLA. LONG TIME NOSEE.

LISTEN, ALL WE NEED IS A SHIP THAT'S LEGAL FOR MAKIN' A DEEP-CORE RUN. THE ALLIANCE WILL PAY 100,000 CREDITS-- IN CASH.

HAN SOLO... YOU NERF-HERDIN' SON OF A --

HOW MANY YEARS SINCE YOU WALKED OUT ON ME?

SOUNDS INTRIGUING, SOLO. THE INTRUDER IS REGISTERED FOR DEEP-CORE FREIGHT HAULING... BUT HE'S NOT READY YET. STILL NEEDS HIS HYPERDRIVE OVERHAULED.

BY THE WAY, WHO'S THE LADY?

LEIA. HAN AND I ARE MARRIED.

MY CONDOLENCES, DEAR... HAN'S GREAT FUN, BUT HE'S A SCOUNDREL... HE'LL BREAK YOUR HEART.

SHE LIKES SCOUNDRELS.

NOT TOO LONG... MAYBE NINX'LL LET ME TAKE THE HYPERDRIVE OUT OF THAT STINKIN' HUTT CHARIOT IN THE CORNER.

NOW, C'MON... HOW LONG BEFORE THE STARLIGHT INTRUDER CAN BE SHIPSHAPE?

WE'RE IN A BIG HURRY.

SURE... WHAT THE HECK. BUT WE'LL NEED SOME OF THOSE FANCY POWER COUPLINGS YOU KEEP STASHED IN YOUR OLD DIGGS, SOLO...

AND LESSEE...

CAN THE WOOKIEE STILL HANDLE A HYDROSPANNER?

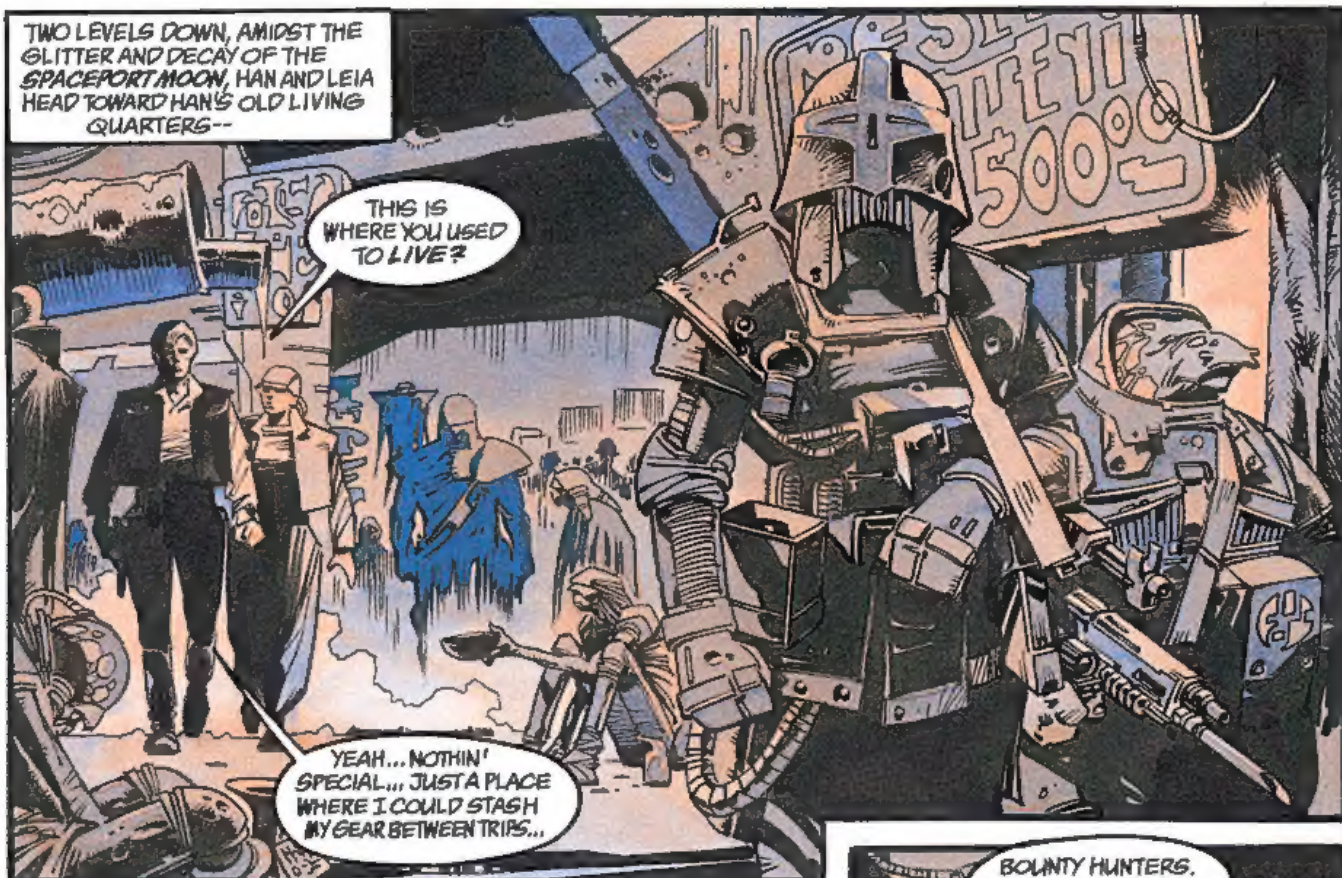
ARE YOU KIDDING?

HAN, TELL CHEWIE TO HELP THESE PEOPLE FIX THEIR SHIP... NOW LET'S GET MOVING!

EVERY SECOND WE WASTE, LUKE FALLS DEEPER INTO DARKNESS!



TWO LEVELS DOWN, AMIDST THE GLITTER AND DECAY OF THE SPACEPORT MOON, HAN AND LEIA HEAD TOWARD HAN'S OLD LIVING QUARTERS--

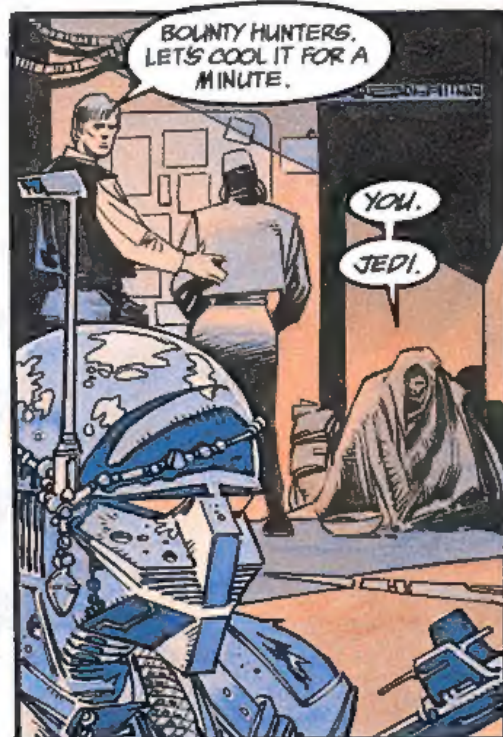
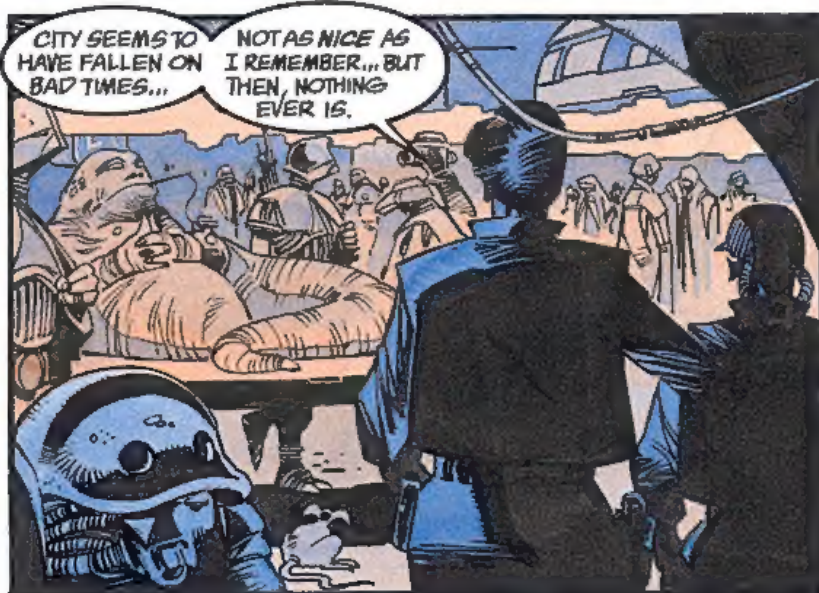


THIS IS WHERE YOU USED TO LIVE?

YEAH... NOTHIN' SPECIAL... JUST A PLACE WHERE I COULD STASH MY GEAR BETWEEN TRIPS...

CITY SEEMS TO HAVE FALLEN ON BAD TIMES...

NOT AS NICE AS I REMEMBER... BUT THEN, NOTHING EVER IS.



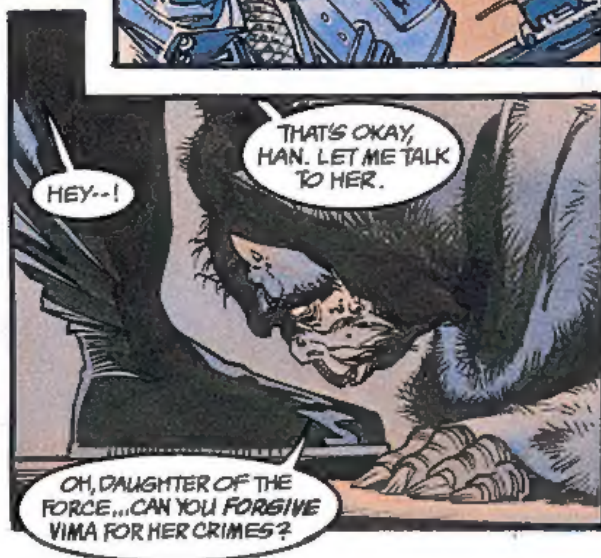
BOUNTY HUNTERS. LET'S COOL IT FOR A MINUTE.

YOU.  
JEDI.



WHAT DID SHE SAY?

JEDI! JEDI!  
VIMA KNOWS! VIMA CAN SEE THE FORCE!



HEY--!

THAT'S OKAY, HAN. LET ME TALK TO HER.

OH, DAUGHTER OF THE FORCE... CAN YOU FORGIVE VIMA FOR HER CRIMES?







